
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Responding to a Septage Spill

Septage is defined as "material removed from septic tanks, cesspools, holding tanks, or other sewage treatment storage units, excluding sewage sludge from public treatment works and industrial waste and any other sludge." It contains a variety of microorganisms. Some of these microbes may be pathogenic (disease causing). When handling septage for transport, it is important to remember that this material can potentially harm people, animals and the environment if not handled properly.

Transporters are required to obtain a septage hauler permit from the Department of Environmental Services, maintain records of each load of septage, and meet all applicable U.S. Department of Transportation and state regulations.

Since septage spills do occur, DES has developed regulations specifying that septage hauling vehicles shall be equipped with spill control or absorbent and disinfectant materials such as lime, or equivalent, sufficient to treat a 25-gallon spill [Env-Wq 1605.09 (b)]. DES has developed the following guidance for responding to and mitigating a septage spill.

Duty to Report

In the event of an accidental release of septage, the responsible party shall:

1. Immediately take action to contain the septage, minimize the environmental impact, and begin clean-up procedures.
2. Notify DES within 24 hours of the release with the following information.

Required Information

The following information must be reported concerning a septage spill:

1. The date, time, and location of the spill.
2. The volume of septage spilled and the volume of septage recovered, both in gallons.
3. The hauler's permit number and the name and telephone number of the driver involved in the incident.
4. The name and telephone number of the client(s) from where the septage was transported.
5. The approximate distance to surface waters, wetlands and storm drains within 100 feet of the spill.
6. The actions taken to contain the spill, disinfect the spill area, minimize the environmental impact, and to clean up the area.

7. Future actions necessary to clean up the spill, if applicable.

Notification Not Required

Notification to DES shall not be required if **all** of the following conditions are met:

1. The spill is less than 25 gallons.
2. The spill is immediately contained.
3. The spill is completely removed and properly disposed within 24 hours.
4. There is no impact to groundwater or surface water.

Typical Site Clean Up and Remediation Procedure for Septage Spills

The person(s) responsible for the spill shall take the following actions.

1. Determine the limits of the spill. If possible, contain the spill by means of barricades or berms of sand or earth. Using powdered lime, spread it over the entire spill area as soon as possible to control odors and mitigate pathogens. Any spill containment devices and structures including berms and fabric shall be installed immediately following the spill and shall remain intact until otherwise directed by the department. Spill control supplies should be accessible in the vehicle and ready to use.
 - Use rubber, latex or similar water-resistant gloves while cleaning up the septage. Use care not to touch uncontaminated items with the gloves once the gloves have come into contact with the septage.
 - Clean up as much of the liquid as possible. Let the area air dry.
 - Pick up any solids, plastics and any other non-biodegradable items, and place the items in a container or sealable plastic bag. Store the containers in a safe place, while awaiting disposal.
2. Native materials underlying the area of the spill shall be excavated to a depth sufficient to remove spilled and leached materials, as directed by DES.
3. All material removed from a spill site shall be properly disposed and may not be treated and returned to the spill site.
4. Clean material shall be used to replace any material excavated and the site shall be restored as close as possible to its condition prior to the spill, as directed by DES.
5. Previously vegetated areas shall be loamed, regraded, limed, fertilized and reseeded to restore vegetation.
6. Erosion control netting, or hay, or both, shall be utilized on erodible slopes.
7. For graveled areas, the gravel shall be excavated and replaced with similar or better quality materials and properly compacted.
8. Smooth, hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete should be treated with lime or a bleach/water solution (consisting of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water) after all material is removed from the spill site.

The person(s) responsible for the spill shall document site remediation efforts with a summary report and shall submit a copy of the report to the land owner, the local health officer or Board of Health, and DES within 30 days of completing the on-site work.

Response to Releases

Any residues resulting from the clean up of spills or leaks must be managed in accordance with the NH Code of Administrative Rules, Chapter Env-Wq 1600 Septage Management. The

transporter is considered the generator of the residues and other clean-up waste and must meet the requirements of Env-Wq 1600, and any other applicable DES rules.

Costs Associated with Site Clean Up and Testing

The person(s) responsible for the spill shall bear:

1. All costs associated with the clean up and removal of spilled septage and subsequent remediation efforts, if necessary.
2. All costs associated with analytical testing required by the department to confirm site clean up and material removal.

Contact Information

The Septage Management Rules, Env-Wq 1600, can be obtained by visiting the DES website at http://www.des.nh.gov/rules/desadmin_list.htm or by calling the DES septage hauling coordinator at (603) 271-2492. An "official" hard copy of all DES-related rules may be obtained from the DES Public Information and Permitting office, (603) 271-2975.

Disclaimer:

This fact sheet is intended as a basic source of information concerning the clean-up and disinfection of a septage spill; it is not intended to replace the administrative rules contained in Env-Wq Chapter 1600. For questions on the status of this information, contact DES at 603-271-2492.

This fact sheet provides only recommendations for clean-up personnel to follow; following these steps does not guarantee that all of the septage will be removed from a spill area, nor the removal of all pathogens and viruses.